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The Tin Soldier



Once Upon a Time

21 March 1970 # 58 - 11 April 1970 # 61

~ THE LITTLE TIN SOLDIER ~

from: The Little Tin Soldier & Other Stories

adapted by Barbara Hayes

Gallery Press: 1985

ALL IN COLOUR - MAKES LEARNING A JOY

Once Upon a Time

EVERY WEDNESDAY

No. 58 • 21st March 1970

PRICE 1/3

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The Tin Soldier

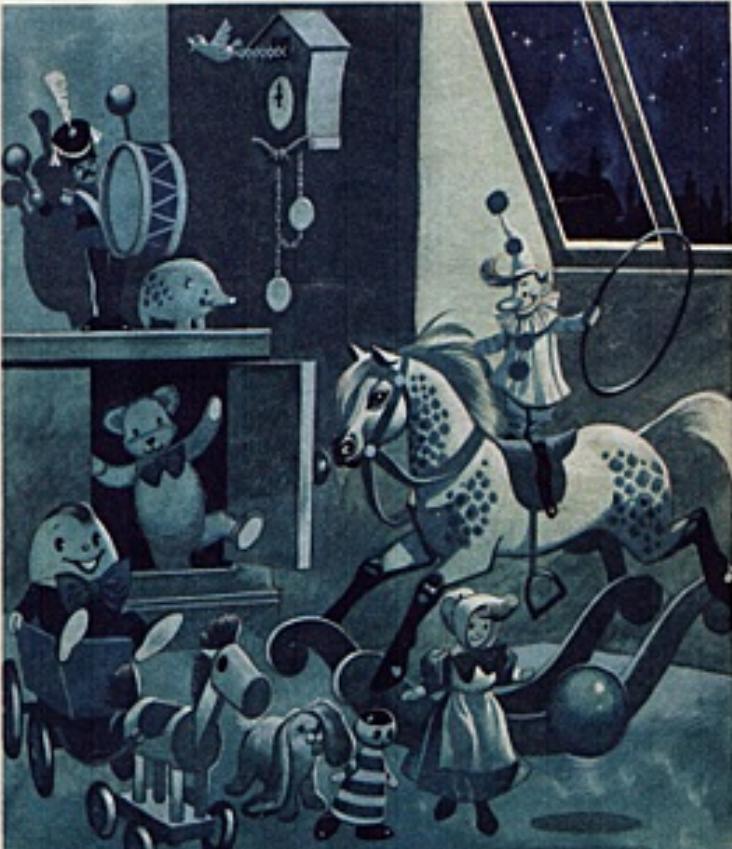


1. Once there were twenty-five tin soldiers. They had all been made out of one tin spoon and they were all exactly the same except one. There had not been enough tin to finish him and he had only one leg, but he stood straight and proud for all that. The soldiers were given to a little boy for his birthday, and he was delighted. He took them out of the box and stood them on the table.

2. There was a splendid cardboard castle on the table and in the open doorway stood a pretty little lady. She held her arms above her head and had one leg raised so high that the tin soldier could not see it, for she was a dancer. But the tin soldier thought she had only one leg, like himself. "She would make the most perfect wife in the world for me," he said to himself.



3. "She lives in a castle, so she must be a nobleman's daughter, while I only have a box which twenty-five of us share," he sighed. "That is no place for her. Still, I must try to get to know her." He hid behind a box and watched the dancing lady.



4. When night came and the people were in bed and the house was dark, the toys came out to play. They danced and chattered and enjoyed themselves. Only the tin soldier and the little dancer did not stir from their places. Then the clock struck twelve.



5. The lid of the box beside the tin soldier flew open. Out popped a Jack-in-the-box in the shape of a little goblin. He saw the tin soldier looking at the dancer. "Keep your eyes to yourself," he said, but the tin soldier pretended not to hear. "All right, wait and see what will happen to you tomorrow," said the goblin.



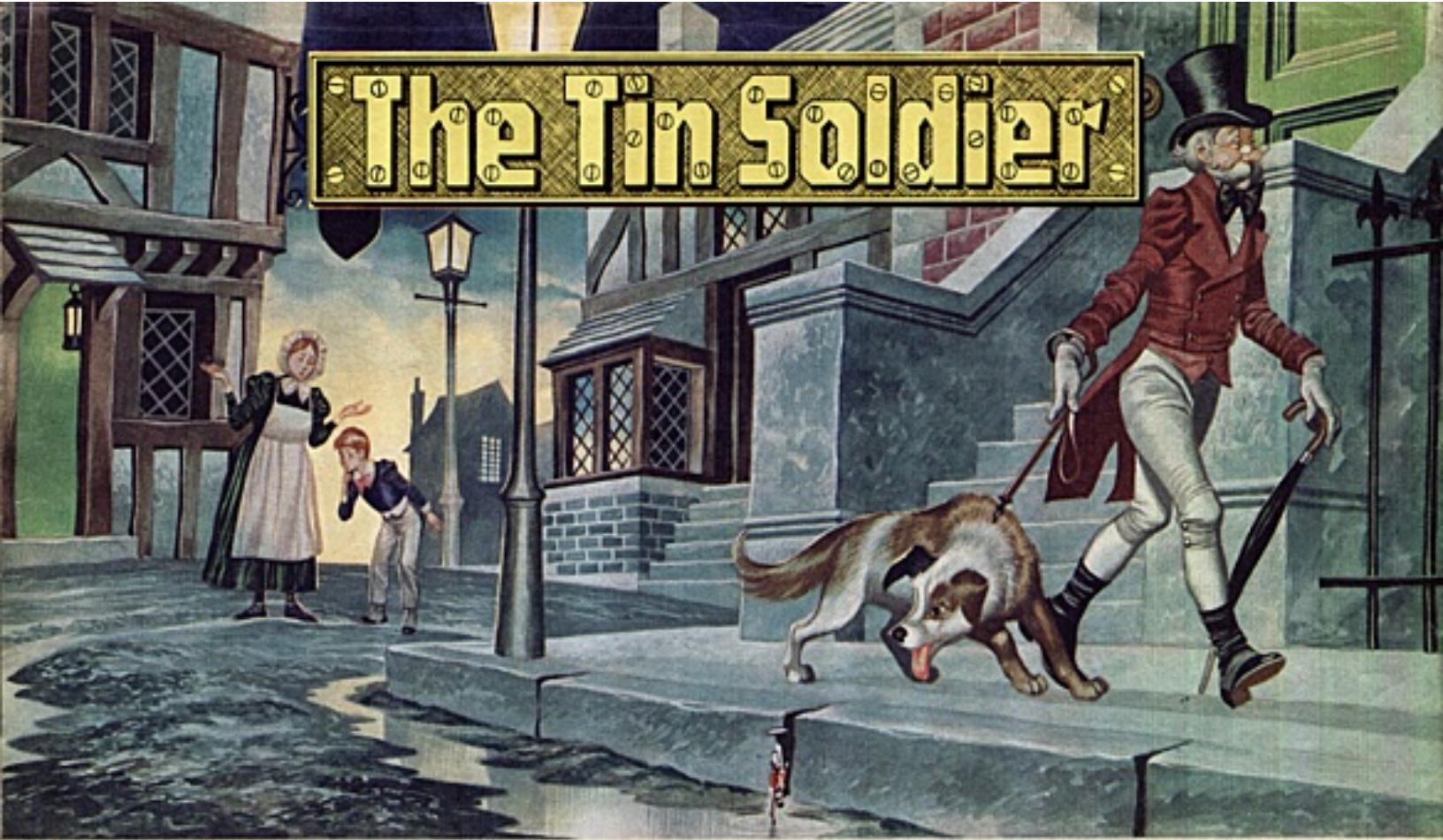
6. Next morning, when the people of the house got up, the little boy came to play with his new soldiers again. He picked up the tin soldier and put him on the window-ledge, where he stood just as straight and proud as if he had two legs, in his bright uniform, with his musket held upright over his shoulder.



7. As he stood on the window-ledge, the tin soldier continued to gaze at the little dancer. Then the window was opened. It was a cold and windy day and nobody knew what was the cause, whether it was a sudden gust of wind or whether it was the spell cast by the little goblin, but the tin soldier fell through the window.

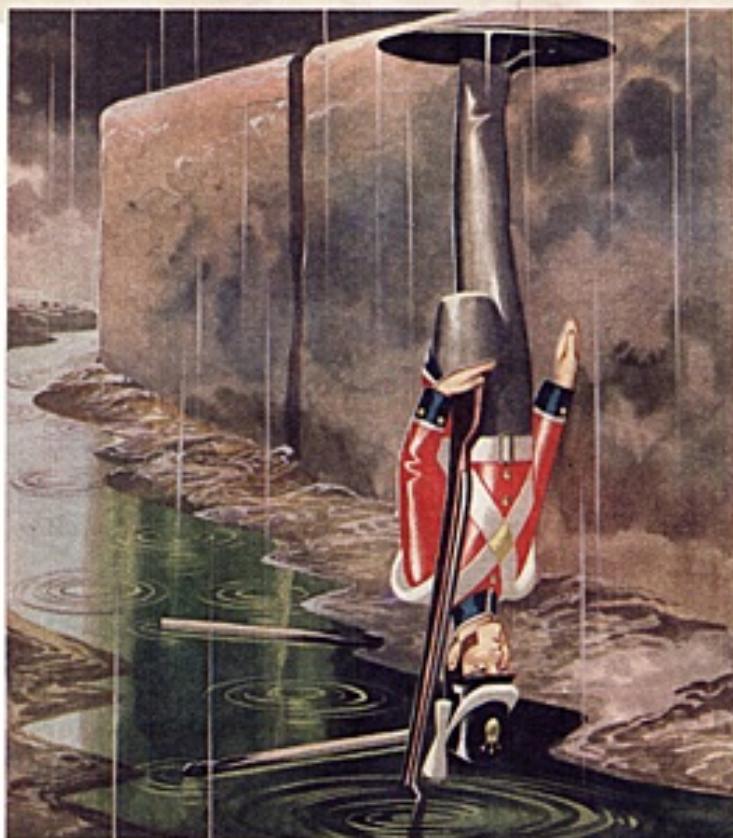
8. Down, down fell the little tin soldier, before the boy had a chance to put out a hand to catch him. It was a terrible fall, for he went head-first down three storeys and he was quite dizzy when he reached the pavement below. As he landed, the fall on the hard ground knocked the breath out of him.

The Tin Soldier



1. A gust of wind had blown the little tin soldier off a window-ledge and he had fallen to the pavement, three storeys below. He landed head-first and the point of the bayonet on his gun stuck firmly between two paving-stones. The poor little soldier was so tightly wedged that he could not move an inch.

2. The little boy who owned the soldiers came down with a servant girl, to look for him, but although they searched and searched and almost trod on the soldier, they did not see him. If he had called out, "Here I am!" they would have seen him, but he thought it would not be right for a soldier to call for help.



3. After a time, the little boy and the servant girl went away, leaving the soldier on the pavement, wondering whether his sad plight was the fault of the Jack-in-a-box, or just an unlucky gust of wind. Just then it began to rain. The rain fell faster and faster until it had soon turned into a regular downpour.



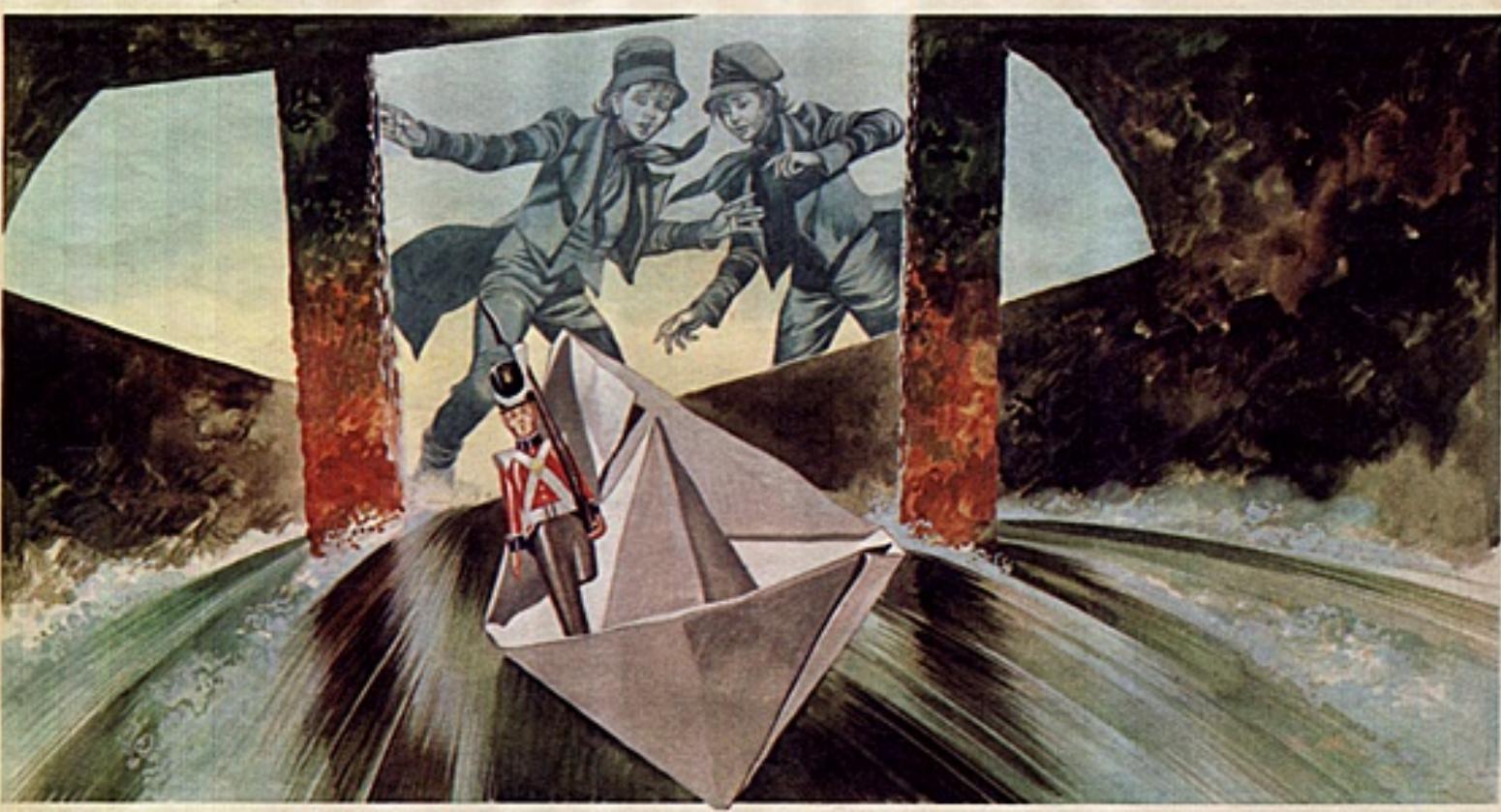
4. The rain fell so fast that it soon filled all the gutters with small rivers of water. At last it slowed down and finally it stopped altogether. Not long after it had stopped, two boys came along the street. One of them happened to notice the tin soldier, stuck between the paving-stones, and bent to pick him up.



5. "Look at this," he cried. "I've found a tin soldier. Let's send him for a sail." They made a little boat out of newspaper, just big enough for the tin soldier, and when it was finished they put him in it. He stood there, straight and proud, holding his musket stiffly over his shoulder, and never moving at all.



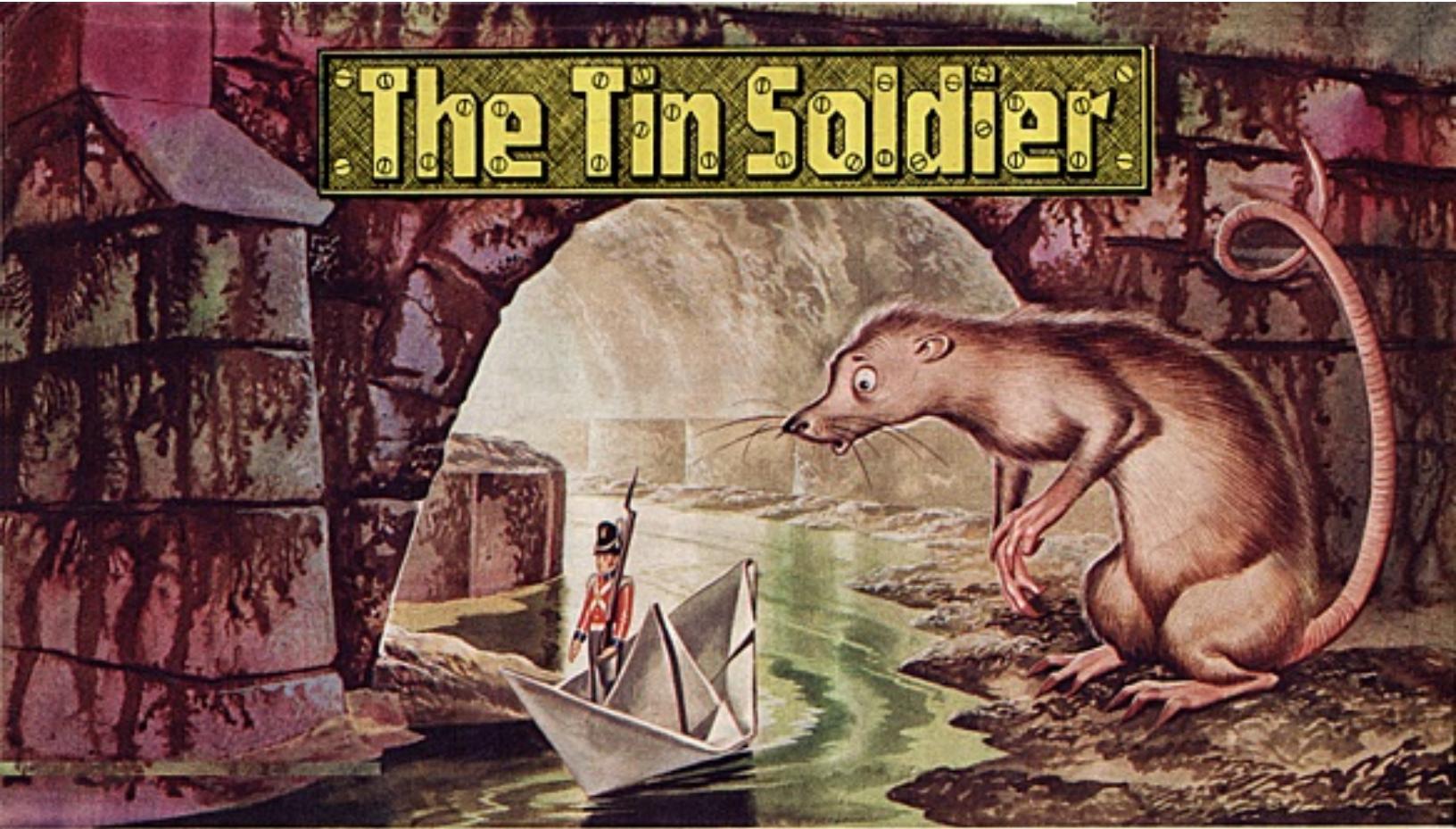
6. The boys launched the little paper boat in the gutter. There was a torrent of water flowing along it after all the rain and the little boat raced along very swiftly. The boys ran beside it, clapping their hands in delight. The little boat was tossed up and down and once it spun round suddenly, without any warning.



7. The tin soldier almost lost his balance, but somehow he managed to keep standing straight and still, never losing hold of his musket. Then the boat reached a place where the water ran down into a drain and the boat was carried down into the drain, too, before the boys could stop it. The soldier went with it.

8. Inside the drain, it was as dark as it had been in the tin soldier's box. "I wonder where I'm off to now?" he said to himself. "And I'm all on my own, too! If only the little dancer from the castle were here in the boat. I shouldn't care how dark it was, or where I went. If she were with me."

The Tin Soldier



1. The tin soldier had been sailing merrily along the gutter in his little paper boat, when suddenly the gutter ran into a drainpipe. The boat and the tin soldier went down into the dark drain, too. It was so dark that at first the soldier could see nothing at all. Just then, two red eyes gleamed at him and he saw a great rat come out of the hole where he lived.

2. The rat glared fiercely at the tin soldier as he swirled past. "Where's your passport?" he demanded in a loud, angry voice. "Show me your passport." The tin soldier said nothing at all. He just stood straight and still, gripping his musket all the tighter. The boat sailed swiftly on and the rat jumped into the water and swam after it, in a great rage.



3. "Stop him!" the rat shouted to all the bits of wood and straw that were floating along with the current. "Stop him—he hasn't paid his toll and he hasn't shown his passport." But the current grew swifter and the little boat whirled along faster, leaving the rat far behind. Then the tin soldier saw light ahead. He had reached the place where the drain poured into a canal.



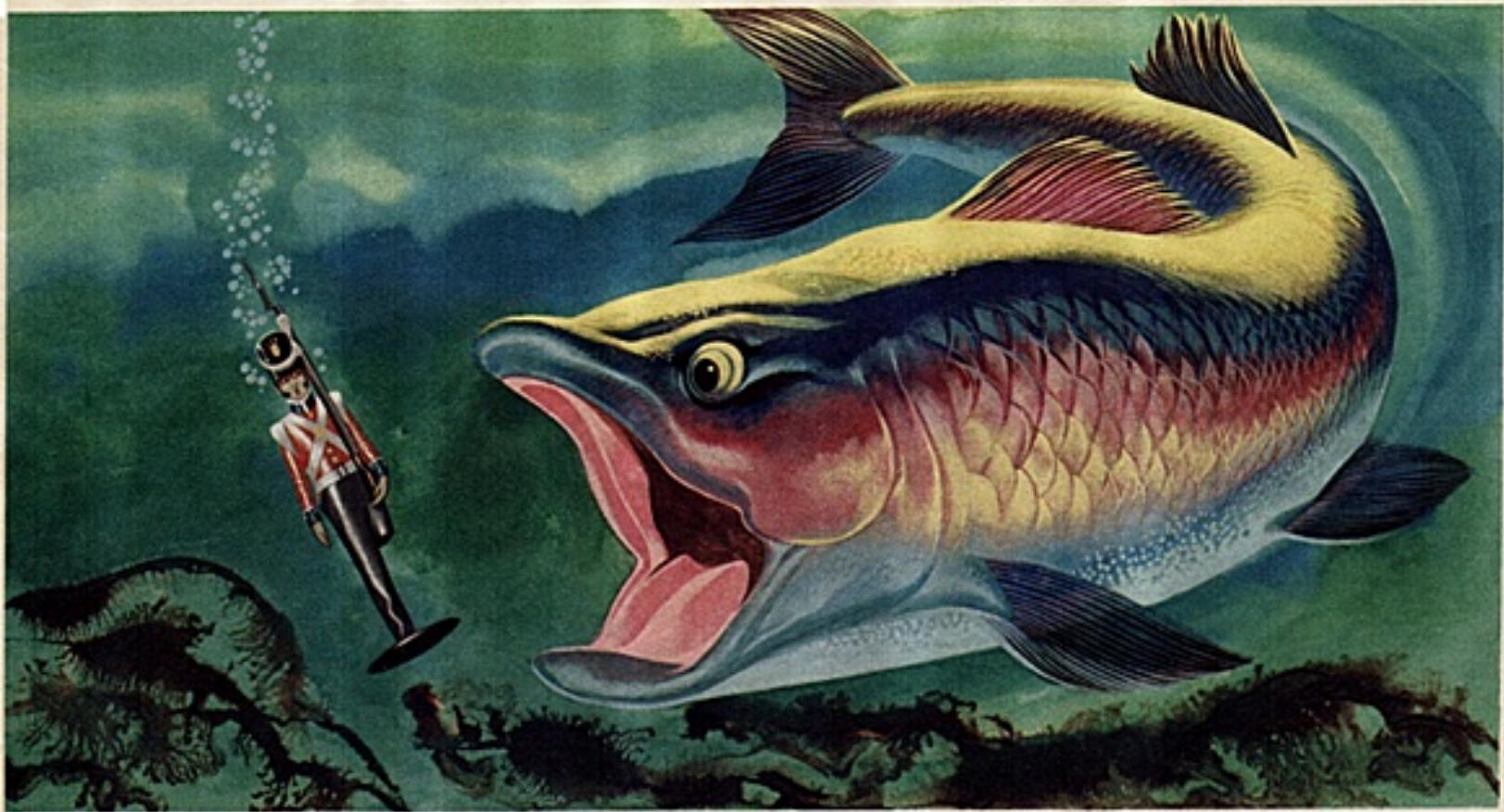
4. For the soldier it was like going over a great waterfall and there was a roaring sound, loud enough to terrify the stoutest heart, but the soldier just held himself straight and stiff and gripped his musket very tightly, never blinking an eyelid, so that he was still standing in exactly the same position when his little boat landed in the water of the canal.



5. However, the current was still carrying him along quite fast, and his little boat, caught in a sudden eddy, spun round three or four times. Then, to the soldier's regret, it began to fill with water. He could feel the little boat beginning to sink under him and he himself was getting lower and lower in the water. Soon, the water was up to his waist.



6. The soldier thought of the little dancer, who stood in the doorway of the cardboard castle in the house where he lived. He sighed, for he was sure he would never see her again. He seemed to hear a voice saying, "Soldier, your death is nigh," and he was determined to die as a brave soldier should. Just then, the paper boat fell to pieces and down he went.



7. The tin soldier, falling through the bottom of the boat, sank down and down into the water. It was dark and cold down there and the soldier thought longingly of the warm box which he shared with the twenty-four other soldiers. He wished he were home again and at the end of his adventures, but he still stood just as straight and proud as before, just as a soldier should.

8. A fish which swam past and noticed him falling thought, "Aha, here is something for me to eat." It swam towards the tin soldier, opening its great jaws wide as it reached him. Looking down into the fish's big mouth, the tin soldier was quite startled, but he was determined to show no sign of fear, and stood without moving as the fish, with one great gulp, snapped him up.

The Tin Soldier



1. The tin soldier, who had been swallowed by a big fish, was most uncomfortable, for there was no room to move and it was very dark, far darker than it had been when he was sailing along the underground gutter. However, he lay, clutching his musket, as stiff and straight as ever. The fish swam around for a time. Then it made some wild jerking movements and lay still.

2. After what seemed a very long time, the soldier saw a gleam of light. Then suddenly a voice said: "Why, it's a tin soldier." Someone was lifting him out of the fish's inside and he was in daylight once more. The fish had been caught and bought by a cook, who was now busy preparing the dinner. The soldier was discovered when the fish was cut open.



3. The cook picked the soldier up and took him into a room where some people were sitting. They were surprised to see a soldier who had travelled in a fish's stomach. The soldier was even more surprised to see that he was back in the room where his adventures had all begun, with the same toys and the same children. The cook put him down on the table with the others.



4. There was the same grand castle and the lovely little dancer was still standing in front of it, poised on one leg, with the other raised in the air. The soldier was pleased, for he could see that she had missed him very much all the time he was away. He and the dancer looked at each other, but they never said a word. Still, the soldier was delighted to be back.



5. At first, the little boy who owned all the tin soldiers was delighted to have his missing soldier back again and played with him happily enough, but then, perhaps in a sudden fit of temper, he picked up the soldier and hurled him into the fire. It might even have been the wicked little goblin who put the boy up to it, for he had no idea why he did it.



6. The tin soldier found himself standing in a blaze of light. The heat was very fierce, but the soldier did not know whether it was the heat of the fire or the glow of his love for the little dancer which he felt. As he looked at her, still standing on the table, he felt that he was melting away. All his bright colours were fading, but he still stood up straight.



7. Just then, a door was opened. There was a sudden draught of air which picked up the little dancer and carried her, as if she were a flying fairy, right into the fire. She landed at the side of the tin soldier and burst into flames. In a few seconds she was gone, while the tin soldier melted away more slowly.



8. Next morning, the servant girl began to clean out the fireplace, ready to light the fire again. There, in the ashes, she found all that was left of the tin soldier—a tiny heart of tin. And beside it was a bit of blackened tinsel from a dancing dress, which was all that was left of the little dancer.



•The Little Tin Soldier•

Once upon a time a box of twenty-five toy soldiers was bought for a young boy. The soldiers were lined up in a long row and carried muskets over their shoulders and wore grand uniforms and were a fine, brave-looking body of men.

The last soldier in the row had only one leg. The elderly toymaker had, most

unfortunately, run out of metal when he came to this last tin soldier and had put him into the box unfinished.

This brave tin soldier was not one to complain. He knew soldiers should be full of courage so he stood up straight and firm on his one leg and made up his mind his master would be proud of him.

There were other toys in the playroom where the box of soldiers lived.

One was a beautiful dancer. She stood poised on one leg in the doorway of the fine toy castle. Her other leg was tucked up under her pretty dress. The steadfast tin soldier did not know this. He considered the beautiful dancer was just like him – one-legged.

"That lovely girl would make a suitable wife for me," he decided.

Then he looked at the castle in which

the dancer lived and said to himself: "If she is used to living in a castle, she would not be content to come and live in a box. In any case, there is not enough space for an extra person."

However, he was forced to think of the Jack-in-the-box, who was an unpleasant fellow forever jeering at the other toys.

One day, after the tin soldier and the Jack-in-the-box had exchanged some cross words, the boy put the tin soldier on to the ledge in front of the window.



The little tin soldier held his musket firmly on his shoulder. He stood steadily on his one leg. He looked straight ahead without blinking. He guarded the window well, as a brave soldier should.

He thought of the evening before. If only the boy knew what went on in the toyroom after dark, how surprised he would be.

As soon as their young master and his brothers and sisters were tucked up to sleep, the toys came to life.

Twenty-four of the toy soldiers lined up and marched up and down.

Left-right! Left-right!

They drilled and paraded like the best soldiers of the king.

The little tin soldier with the one leg could not march with the others, but he stood brave and firm with no sign of sorrow on his face.

"If I cannot march, then I will be steadfast and true," he smiled.

The dolls went to tea with each other. The toy nurses and doctors pretended to work in their hospital. The crayons climbed out of their packets and turned the pages of the colouring books. The toy oven glowed and cooked tiny cakes for the little folk who lived in the doll's house.

"Am I the only person not to move and join in the jollity?" thought the tin soldier, but never for a single moment did he cease standing smartly at attention and shouldering his musket and staring boldly to the front.

Then he noticed that the beautiful dancer was not moving either.

She stood always delicately balanced on her one long leg, her graceful arms held up high, her lovely dress shining in the evening light and her other leg tucked out of sight under the frills of her skirt.

"We are so alike," thought the tin soldier. "I'm sure we were meant for each other." But neither of them moved.

Then that evening, as on every evening, the clock struck twelve. CRASH!

The lid of the Jack-in-the-box sprang open and the sneering Jack-in-the-box came leaping out, looking for trouble.

He glared angrily at the dolls and the

doctors and nurses, but they were too busy to take any notice of him.

He scowled at the soldiers, but they were on the battlements of the castle preparing to fire a cannon and he dared not jeer at them.

Then he bent over the lone tin soldier standing steadfast and firm on his one leg.

"What are you staring at?" snapped the Jack-in-the-box.

The tin soldier looked straight forward and did not reply.

Soldiers on duty are not supposed to chatter to strangers.

"I'll teach you to stare at me," snarled the Jack-in-the-box. "You should keep



your eyes to yourself. I will make trouble for you tomorrow."

Then he turned to shout hurtful things at the other toys.

The night sped by. At last the toys became tired and settled back into their homes and went to sleep.

Next morning, the sun had risen and the tin soldier was standing on the window ledge, thinking about the Jack-in-the-box. "He cannot harm me," thought the tin soldier, but he was wrong.

The Jack-in-the-box was in possession of magic powers. He made the boy think it would be nice to open the window in front of the toy soldier. Then he made the boy

think it would be fun to stand the Jack-in-the-box in the fresh air outside.

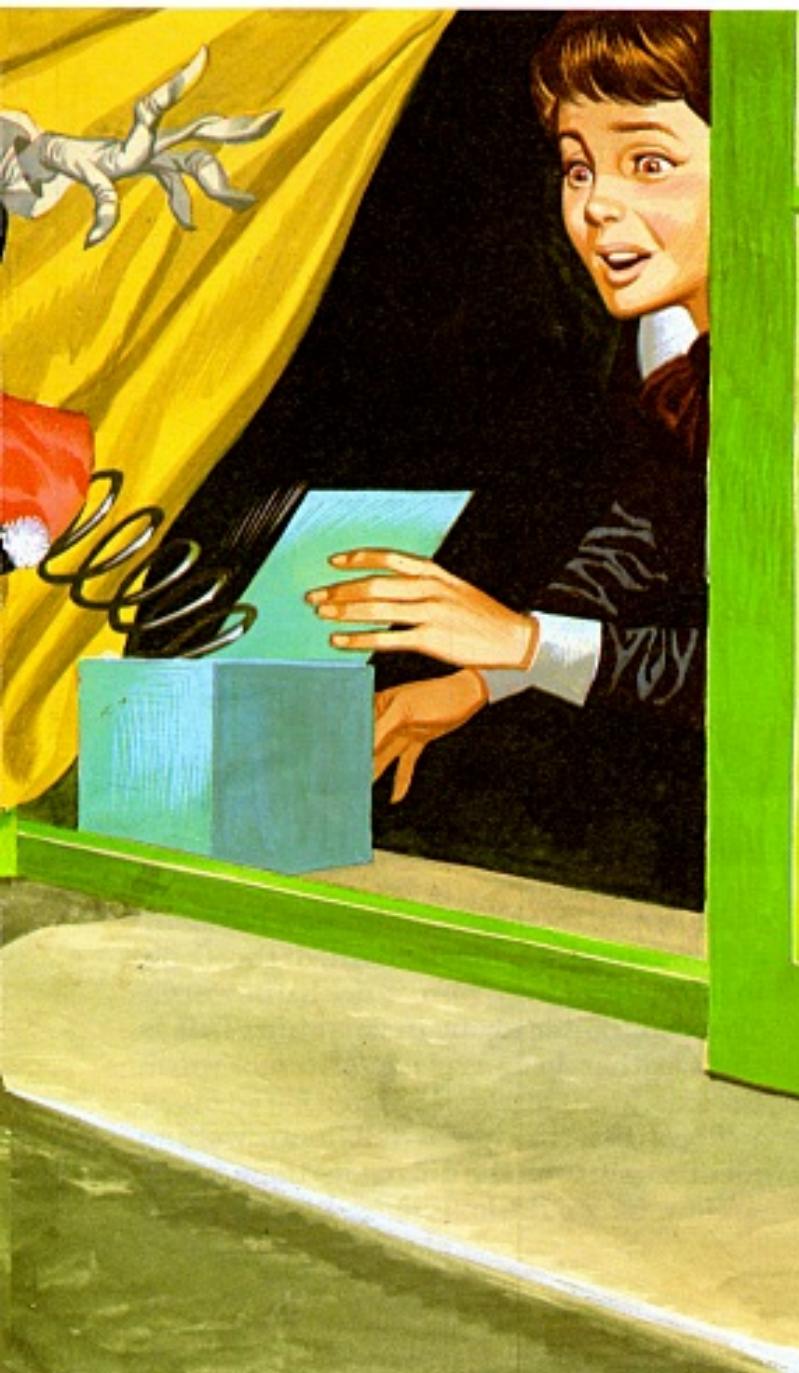
CRASH!

The lid of the box flew back and the Jack-in-the-box sprang out.

His arms flapped wide and his hands cut through the air. They knocked the little tin soldier off balance. He fell off the window ledge, through the air and down, down into the street below. How the Jack-in-the-box laughed.

It was a long fall from the window to the ground. The tin soldier rolled over and over until he hit the stone sidewalk.

He bounced and rolled and twisted until he came to rest, far along the road,



standing upside down with his bayonet caught in a crack between the cobbles.

Still the steadfast little tin soldier did not cry out or complain. He stood to attention and stared forward with a brave face, as a soldier should.

The little boy was very upset.

He called the maid-servant and the two of them ran down to the road.

They searched the pavements and the cobbled road and peered into the muddy puddles, but they could not see the tin soldier.

He had bounced far away from their door and they were not looking for him in the right place.

"Tin soldier! Tin soldier! Where are you?" called the boy.

The tin soldier stood to attention but the wet and the cold made his lips so stiff he could not reply.

It was windy and raining and the maid-servant wanted to go back indoors.

"We cannot stay out here, young master," she said to the boy. "You are getting soaked. Mistress will be cross with me if you catch cold."

"But the soldier must be around here somewhere," wailed the boy.

"That may be," replied the maid-servant, "but we cannot see him. In any case it was only that soldier with one leg, wasn't it? Losing him does not matter. You can play with the twenty-four other good soldiers."

The boy sighed and after one last look round the street, he went back indoors.

"I know he had only one leg," said the boy as they mounted the stairs back to the playroom, "but he stood straight and true and I am sure he had a brave and faithful heart."

The steadfast tin soldier just managed to hear the boy's words. He felt so proud! But now, what was he to do?

The rain fell and the wind blew and the gutters filled with water and became little streams.

Many people passed along the street, but no one noticed the tin soldier standing upside down with his bayonet caught amongst the cobbles.



Only a little dog saw him and barked.

"Stop fussing, Flash," called the dog's master, dragging him quickly onwards. "We can't loiter about in this rain. This is the weather to hurry home to our warm fireside."

The little tin soldier felt tears welling up in his eyes, but he did not let them fall.

How he would love to be by the warm



fireside in the playroom. How he longed to glimpse the beautiful dancer standing gracefully on her one leg.

He would not be hurt by the jeering remarks of the Jack-in-the box if only he could be back in the safety of the playroom.

The toy soldier set his face firmly in a brave expression and did not complain. He knew that he must be steadfast like a true

soldier and not allow himself to be depressed by his difficult situation.

To make the time pass, the little tin soldier thought about all his favourite things: the beautiful dancer, the crackle of logs on the playroom fire, the smell of freshly-baked bread, the springtime cherry blossom in the garden and the rainbow he had seen after a shower.

It seemed that the tin soldier stood in the gutter for hours, but at last the rain stopped falling and two boys came skipping along the pavement.

Their sharp, young eyes saw the tin soldier and they picked him up.

"Here's a stout-hearted fellow," they smiled.

"I wonder how he came to be out here?" said one.

"Goodness knows!" replied the other. "But he deserves a treat after standing in

all this rain." Then they noticed that the tin soldier had only one leg.

"Well, he is a brave fellow to stand so well to attention and to hold that heavy musket so firmly on his shoulder," they decided.

"What is your name and where do you live?" they asked. "Are you very far from your home?"

"We will take you there if you will only speak and tell us where to go," they said, for they were kind-hearted boys.





How the tin soldier longed to tell them about the warm playroom along the road, but the cold had frozen his lips and he could not say a word.

He could only stand straight and firm, like a true soldier.

"Well, if you cannot tell us where you live, then we will keep you," smiled the boys, who had taken quite a fancy to the brave little chap.

One of the lads held the tin soldier in his hands and they walked away along the

road, pleased that they had spotted him.

If the tin soldier had stayed with the lads he would have had a happy home, but the wicked, magical Jack-in-the-box was still casting his evil spells in the direction of the little tin soldier.

Through his magic, the Jack-in-the-box could see that the tin soldier had been rescued. He sent thoughts to lodge in the heads of the boys, who had no idea that they were being influenced by such a strange, hard-hearted mischief-maker.

The boys looked at the streams still running along the gutters. "Let us give the soldier a ride in a boat" suggested one of the boys. "It will be a treat for him. He cannot have travelled about much in the past with only one leg."

"Good idea!" agreed the other.

He pulled some paper from his pocket and started to fold it into a boat-shape.

The rainwater was still running swiftly along the gutters in a wide stream.

One of the boys held up the soldier and spoke to him.

"Have you ever been on a boat trip before?" he asked. "It is fine fun. You can pretend you are a soldier being sent to

foreign parts to fight the enemies of the king. Pirates will attack you and foreign fighting ships will chase you. You will be caught in storms and lost in fog, but you will battle through and your country will be proud of you."

The steadfast tin soldier stood to attention.

This boat trip sounded full of adventure. He would face up to it as a brave soldier should.

"The boat is ready now," called the boy who had been folding the paper.

They stood the tin soldier in the paper boat and set it sailing on the water swirling down the edge of the road.





It was indeed an extremely perilous trip. The boat swayed from side to side. It raced round corners and was almost wrecked on some jagged cobbles.

Through all the dangers the little tin soldier stood up straight and tall and showed no fear, but kept his brave face looking forward, as a soldier should.

The boys ran after him.

"This is the best fun we have had in weeks," they laughed.

"What a grand soldier and what a fine boat!" they chuckled.

The tin soldier did indeed feel that he was in a handsome boat sailing to foreign lands in search of adventure.

"If only the lovely dancer were sailing with me, I should be completely happy," he thought.

But the dancer was not with him and the magical Jack-in-the-box was still plotting for mischief to befall.

The merry, bubbling stream flowing along the gutter turned yet another corner.

The boys laughed and whooped and stared down at their little boat.

They did not think to look ahead. They did not see that the stream ahead was flowing under a long gutter board.

The bright, merry stream in a moment would turn into a dark, gloomy torrent with dangers hidden beneath its waves.

The boat spun round and round. It filled with water. The tin soldier knew it must sink soon.

He stood to attention with the water lapping up to his neck.

Then he felt the boat becoming soft and breaking up beneath him. It was only made of paper and it was being soaked to shreds.

The soldier thought of the beautiful dancer standing so gracefully on one leg. He was sure he would never again see her lovely face.

The wet paper split apart and the brave soldier slid down through the water – but not to the bottom of the canal.

Now his luck really did change, although it was hard for him to realise that it had.

As he sank down through the water, the soldier was snapped up by a big fish. How dark and narrow it was inside the fish! But then, the soldier was not afraid of the dark, so he was not too unhappy. He lay at attention, shouldering his musket and thinking brave thoughts, as a soldier should.

For a while the fish swam smoothly, then it turned and twisted and raced to and fro. Then it shot up high and fell down with a heavy slap. After that it lay still.

For a while nothing more happened.

Then the soldier saw a sudden flash of light which was dazzling to him after he had been so long in the dark.

Two fingers pulled him out from the inside of the fish and a voice said:

"A tin soldier! What a thing to find inside a fish! I must take it to show young master."

The fish had been caught and sold. A kitchen maid had cut it open to prepare it for supper and the soldier had been found in the fish's belly.

Still blinking at the sudden light, the tin soldier felt himself splashed with cold water from the tap, rubbed with a rough towel and then taken into a bright, welcoming parlour.

His eyes became accustomed to the light. As he was set on a table, he looked around him. How amazed and delighted he was to see that he was back in the very same home from which he had fallen such a long, weary time ago!

His young owner, the boy, came forward and picked him up.

"It is my own tin soldier! The one which fell out of the window," he said. "Oh, I am so pleased. I must take him along to see the other toys."

He carried the steadfast tin soldier up to the playroom. There were the other soldiers. There was the box in which the soldier lived.

Most marvellous of all – there was the lovely dancer, still balancing on one leg with her arms spread gracefully into the





air above her. The tin soldier thought he had never seen anything so lovely in all his life.

He looked round.

The Jack-in-the-box was gone.

"After all his travels, I don't think this soldier could settle down with the other soldiers again," said the boy. "He must go to live in the castle, as befits a great adventuring hero."

He put the soldier in the castle near the dancer and then he went away to supper.

After that, the happy boy would go to bed.

Later on the toys came to life, as usual. They asked to hear the soldier's story. They told him the Jack-in-the-box had been thrown away as a result of all his naughtiness.

Most agreeable of all, the dancer smiled and danced round the soldier and said that as he was now a great man and had been so brave, she would marry him and they could live in the castle. And they lived happily ever after.